



Region 2 Headquarters
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804
Phone 406-542-5500
February 27, 2019

Dear Interested Citizen:

Enclosed you will find for your review, the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposal to implement an exchange-of-use cooperative grazing system (grazing system) on the Spotted Dog Wildlife Management Area (SDWMA) and adjacent private lands in Powell County northeast of Deer Lodge, Montana. The proposed grazing system would seek to establish a balanced distribution of grazing by elk and cattle to improve grassland habitats across SDWMA and private ownership boundaries. The grazing system would be implemented on a portion (~8% or 2,800 acres) of SDWMA and would remain in effect for approximately 6 years beginning in early summer 2019. The primary goals of the proposed action are to:

1. Improve the health and productivity of native grasslands over a larger landscape by scheduling grazing treatments that are separated by long rest periods on SDWMA and adjacent lands;
2. use grazing treatments on SDWMA to enhance spring transition range for a migratory elk herd and to introduce greater structural complexity to grasslands, intended to benefit a variety of wildlife species; and
3. allow native grasslands adjacent to SDWMA that comprise critical elk-winter range to be rested on a scheduled basis, which would also benefit other game and nongame wildlife.

The EA may also be obtained by mail from Region 2 FWP, 3201 Spurgin Rd., Missoula 59804; by phoning 406-542-5540; by emailing shrose@mt.gov; or by viewing FWP's Internet website <http://fwp.mt.gov> ("News," then "Recent Public Notices," beginning February 27). Comments may be made online on the EA webpage or may be directed by mail or email to the addresses above. Comments must be received by FWP no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 28, 2019. (Due to a delay in issuing this EA, the original comment-deadline date listed in the newspaper legal notices as March 25 has been extended.)

As part of the decision-making process under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), I expect to issue the Decision Notice for this EA very soon after the end of the comment period. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission has the final decision-making authority for FWP land leases, and the Commission will be asked to render its decision on this proposal at its regularly scheduled April 25th meeting (to be held at the FWP office in Bozeman).

Sincerely,

Randy Arnold
Regional Supervisor

RA/sr